

REMARKS

I. Status of the claims

Claims 1 to 35 are pending in this application. No claim is being amended in this Response.

II. Double Patenting rejections

The Office rejected claims 1 to 8 and 17 to 35 under the judicially created doctrine of double patenting over claims 1 and 3 to 23 of U.S. Patent No. 6, 624,185. The Office argues that although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct.

Without acquiescing in the rejection and with the purpose of expediting prosecution, Applicants are filing with this Response a Terminal Disclaimer in accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.321(c). However, the filing of a Terminal Disclaimer to obviate the rejection does not constitute an admission of the propriety of the rejection. See MPEP § 804.02. Applicants reserve the right to argue the separate patentability of the present claims over claims 1 and 3 to 23 of U.S. Patent No. 6, 624,185, should that need ever arise.

The Office objected to claims 9 to 16 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The filing of the Terminal Disclaimer should obviate the current rejections and objections and respectfully request that they be withdrawn.

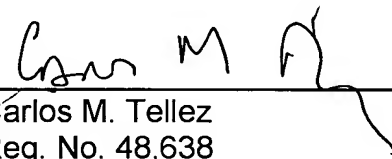
III. Conclusions

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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